

POLITICAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY

COLLECTIVIZATION OF AGRICULTURE IN THE SOVIET UNION I

AS early as 1906, Lenin, fully recognizing in the agrarian events of 1904-5 the harbingers of a social revolution, nevertheless saw fit to admonish his followers in these words: "We are supporting the peasant movement to the last, but we must remember that this is not the class which is capable of bringing about or will bring about a socialist revolution."¹ This attitude toward the peasantry flows directly from what Lenin called a "truism" known to every Marxian, that the "leading social forces in every capitalistic society are the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, while all the other social groups who occupy an intermediate position . . . inevitably gravitate in the direction of the first or second major group."² In the light of the position of the peasantry during the French Revolution, in the revolutionary movement of the nineteenth century in Western Europe, and in the first decade of the twentieth in Russia, Lenin held that "all the attempts of the petite-bourgeoisie in general, and the peasantry in particular, to assert their power and direct economic and political policies along their own lines, ended in defeat."³ Soon after the outbreak of the February Revolution of 1917 he warned his followers that a union of the peasantry with the bourgeoisie might take place. Hence, "the proletarian party at present must not

¹ Lenin, N., *Peresmotr Agrarnoi Programmy Rabochei Partii* (A Reexamination of the Agrarian Program of the Workers Party) (St. Petersburg, 1906), p. 27.

² Lenin, N., *Sobranie Sochinenii* (Collected Works) (Moscow, 2d ed.), vol. XXIII, p. 290.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. XXVI, p. 290.

place any hopes on the community of interests of the proletariat and the peasantry. We are striving to win the peasantry over to our side; the peasantry, however, is more or less consciously on the side of the capitalists."⁴

Despite this critical attitude, Lenin was aware of the fact that the October Revolution would not have triumphed but for the support of the poor and middle peasants. He realized the importance of an alliance between the workers and the majority of the peasants, since the rôle of the latter group in a still overwhelmingly agrarian Russia was not less significant than that of the proletariat. If we may consider the October Revolution of 1917 as the resultant of several compounded forces, of which the peasantry is a leading one, then, to a large extent as the peasantry shifts, so does the direction of the Revolution. In the crucial year of the Soviet Republic, in 1921, he insisted that "only an agreement with the peasantry can save the social revolution in Russia until the revolution takes place in other countries".⁵ As the prospects of an early communist outbreak abroad faded away, an understanding with the peasants became the central point of Lenin's policies. When Lenin, through the promulgation of the New Economic Policy, spoke of establishing a closer link (*smychka*) between the workers and the peasants, it was more than the expression of a temporary policy, it was the premise upon which rested the possible solution of the peasant problem, and, by the same token, the development and preservation of the Soviet State.

The practical expression of this all-important link is the socialization of agriculture. This proceeds along two lines: the organization of peasant collective farms and the organization of State farms. The present inquiry is concerned with the former, which the Communists view at this moment as the most important way of solving the peasant problem.

The overthrow of Tsarism and the nationalization of the land and industry did away with the superstructure of capitalism in Russia. The application of the slogan, "All Land to the Peasants", increased the number of farms from 15 mil-

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. XX, p. 245.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. XXII, p. 238.

lion before the February Revolution to nearly 22 million in 1923,⁶ 24 million in 1925 and over 25 million in 1928.⁷ Lenin believed that the domination of the bourgeoisie rested not only upon its international solidarity but also "upon the strength of the small producers who give birth to capitalism and bourgeoisie—daily, hourly and all the time."⁸ Therefore he interpreted the great increase in the number of small village producers as an indication that the foundation of capitalism in the village still remained. A classless society signified the absence of not only the landed nobility and the bourgeoisie but also the elimination of millions of small individual farmers and producers. The only way to eradicate them was through "the transfer of the economy of the country [including that of agriculture] . . . to a technical base of large-scale production."⁹

Lenin consented only grudgingly to the land decree of October 26, 1917 (November 7, 1917) with its provision for an equal distribution of the land among the peasants. He interpreted the decree as an approval of the division of the land of the rich landowners which had actually taken place in many parts of the country. Failure to approve it would have jeopardized the very existence of the Revolution. But Lenin felt that the solution of the agrarian problem was not in the egalitarian division and in the individual farming of the land. "A system of division of land", he maintained, "was opportune at the outset . . . in order to show that the land had been taken away from the rich landowners and turned over to the peasants."¹⁰ But this could not solve the problem. When the peasantry, through its own experience, realized "that egalitarian division [of land] was nonsense" it would come to appreciate the fact that only "in communes, 'artels', and other

⁶ *Selskoe Khoziaistvo S.S.S.R. v 1923-24 (Agricultural Economy of the U.S.S.R. in 1923-24)* (People's Commissariat of Finance, Moscow, 1924), p. vi.

⁷ *Statisticheskii Spravochnik S.S.S.R. za 1928 (Statistical Handbook of the U.S.S.R. for 1928)* (Central Statistical Administration, Moscow, 1929), p. 82.

⁸ Lenin, N., *op. cit.*, vol. XXV, p. 173.

⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. XXVI, p. 46.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. XXIII, p. 282.

coöperative organizations for the collective cultivation of the land lies salvation from the disadvantages of small-scale economy."¹¹

The proletariat must realize, Lenin maintained, that the peasant is both a petit-bourgeois and a toiler, and that "as a toiler the peasant gravitates toward socialism, preferring the dictatorship of the workers to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The peasant as a grain seller gravitates toward the bourgeoisie, toward free trade, i. e., back in the direction . . . of capitalism."¹² It accordingly becomes imperative for the proletariat to advance the interests of the peasant-toiler over those of the peasant-petit-bourgeois. The surest way of achieving this is through a system of collective working of the land. He warned his followers time and again that the change in the system of agriculture should not come through coercion or by mere edict from above—"Let it be so!" The proletarian leadership should crystallize itself, he said, not into a power to force the peasant against his will into a collectivized system, but rather into a means of creating the necessary conditions for a voluntary shift. In an agricultural country like Russia, Lenin maintained, "we rest our case on the truism that through methods of coercion we shall achieve nothing. . . . To apply violence here means to ruin the entire cause. A continuous process of educating [the peasant] is essential here."¹³ He insisted that "the attempt to introduce a collectivized system of agriculture through decrees and regulations would constitute one of the greatest of absurdities,"¹⁴ because "only those collectives are of value which are organized by the peasants themselves, through their own initiative, and the superiority of which has already been tested, in practice, by the peasants."¹⁵

Lenin's proposed method of bringing about a collective system of agriculture points clearly to the pace to be followed. Considering the general make-up of the Russian peasant, par-

¹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. XXXII, p. 282.

¹² *Ibid.*, vol. XXIV, p. 314.

¹³ *Ibid.*, vol. XXIV, p. 168.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. XXIII, p. 252.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. XXIV, p. 174.

ticularly his adherence to old forms and his distrust of large-scale economy, Lenin pointed out that "it is self-evident that such a transition . . . a transition from individual peasant farming to collective working of the land, requires a long time, and under no circumstances can it be accomplished at once."¹⁶ Tsarism, in his opinion, could be overthrown in a few days, the landlords and capitalists expropriated in a few weeks, but the solution of the agrarian problem "which we are now approaching . . . can be achieved only through extremely persistent and continuous effort. . . . For the collective working of the land we shall have to fight step by step, inch by inch."¹⁷

A long time before Lenin formulated his views, the Russian peasant, through sheer force of necessity, properly gauged the importance of collective action. For instance, the land commune system, which, before the promulgation of the Stolypin land reform, covered almost eighty per cent of the total peasant land allotments,¹⁸ had taught them lessons in effective coöperative action long before the modern coöperative movement came into existence. Under this system the land was owned by the entire village commune, or *mir*. In order that each member of the commune might use the land on an equal basis, the *mir* would periodically redivide the land among the members, allowing each one to utilize the allotted land for his own purposes. But even "where there was no repartition, even when there existed the hereditary tenure which would not permit it, the roots of the peasant households still interlocked,"¹⁹ because the peasants held their land allotments in numerous widely scattered strips. This prevailing system greatly entangled their land relations. Physical consolidation of the land as a means of obliterating the boundary strips, and disentangling the peasants' land relations, was practically unknown. Under

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. XXIII, p. 423.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. XXIII, p. 423.

¹⁸ Maslov, S., *Krestianskoe Khoziaistvo* (Peasant Economy) (Moscow, 1920), p. 88.

¹⁹ Robinson, G. T., *Rural Russia under the Old Regime* (New York, 1932), p. 122.

the circumstances "it was inevitable that the households should follow a common routine in the seeding, harvesting, pasturing and fallowing of the intermingled strips in each great field."²⁰ This close connection led to collective activities which were not limited to the "holding, renting, purchasing and distributing of the land."²¹ They also found their expression, "though much less commonly, in the actual labor of production."²² Thus "in 'artels' or cooperative groups, the peasants plow the land, and sow, harvest and thresh the grain . . . mow hay, cut down forests and brushwood . . . construct enclosures, common threshing floors, grist mills, pasture fences, dams, roads, ponds and ditches."²³ In general, in the Russian commune, collective labor assumed such proportions that "history cannot measure even approximately the variety and extent of these activities."²⁴

Despite the variety of collective activity in which the peasant participated, he still retained a considerable degree of economic autonomy within the village commune, while large-scale collective farming, as the Communists view it, is predicated on the disappearance of this autonomy. But viewing the land commune system in connection with the spread of collectivization in Soviet Russia, one cannot but notice that within the old prevailing system of agriculture there evolved one fundamental element of the present movement—the element of collective action.

The collective movement in the Soviet Union falls into two phases: the period from the triumph of the Bolshevik Revolution to 1929, and the period inaugurated in the spring of 1929 under what is known as the Five-Year Plan in Agriculture.

The beginning of the first period, the period of intensive preparatory work, dated from the Land Decree of October 26, 1917 (November 7, 1917). The first article of this decree states that "the landowners' right of property in land is herewith abolished without compensation." The provision that "the lands of the rank-and-file peasants and the rank-and-file

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 125.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 125 (quoting Sergei Witte).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

Cossacks are not subject to confiscation" (Article 5) merely insures these two groups the right of cultivating the land they formerly owned. The Peasant Land Instruction which was incorporated in the same decree shows that private property in land, whether of the rich landowner or the rank-and-file peasant, was done away with:

The right of private property in land is to be abolished for all time. The land shall not be bought, sold, leased or otherwise alienated. All lands, whether belonging to the State, the former imperial family, the ex-Tsar, the monasteries, or the church, whether copyhold, entailed, private, public or peasant, shall be taken over without compensation, turned into the property of the entire people, and placed at the disposal of all who till them for use (Article 1).

Thus, this land decree did away with what the Bolsheviks always considered the greatest obstacle to the solution of the agricultural problem in Russia—private ownership of land.

In the Decree on Land Socialization issued on February 19, 1918 we find the first attempt to give legal form to Lenin's policies. It states specifically that the land policy of the Soviet Union "is to encourage a collective system of farming . . . at the expense of individual farming, with a view toward the transition to the socialist system of agriculture" (Article 11-e). The Decree also provides that "the State is to offer every encouragement, material and moral, to the collective system of working the land" (Article 11-e). But the legal foundation upon which the collective system of agriculture in Soviet Russia rests is to be found in the "Decree Concerning the Socialist Plan of Land Organization and Measures Pertaining Thereto", promulgated on February 14, 1919. This decree states that "all the land within the borders of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, no matter who may be cultivating it now, is considered a single state fund." We also find here a definite statement as to what the State intends to do with the land. The decree provides for the "building up of a unified agricultural economy . . . through large state agricultural undertakings, communes . . . and other forms of coöperative

land utilization" (Article 3, section 1). It views "all forms of individual land farming . . . as transitory and passing." The decree touches upon the reasons for creating State farms (*sovkhozy*), defines the nature of an agricultural commune (Article 60), and specifically directs the People's Commissariat for Agriculture and all its branches "to give all possible assistance to agricultural communes . . . *artels* and other agricultural coöperative societies—supplying them with seed, implements, cattle and other forms of agricultural and technical aid" (Article 135).

These decrees were to be supplemented by a series of measures and policies systematically and gradually—measures of a nature easily grasped by the peasants whose mode of living and thinking stem from old methods of tilling the land. And it was out of consideration for this factor that there arose at the very outset the problem of deciding upon a means of uniting private and social interests in a way which would make the transition easy for the small land cultivator. This was to be effected through the collective farm or the *kholkhoz*.^{24a} The latter is characterized by a physical consolidation of a number of individual peasant farms into a single block of land; by a complete or partial socialization of all or only the basic means of production, and by the substitution of a single, general planned process for the individual labor processes. The various forms of agricultural collectives fall into three categories: agricultural communes, societies for the joint cultivation of the land (*toz*) and agricultural *artels* (Sec. 3, Art. 1 Land Decree of Feb. 14, 1919). All these forms took root during the first period of collectivization, and with a varied degree of success have continued throughout the last sixteen years.

The three forms differ in the degree to which the land and the other means of production of the members are socialized, and in the manner of distributing the income among the members. Measured in these terms, the highest form of an agricultural collective is a commune. Here all members pledge themselves to a complete collectivization of their individual

^{24a} Literal translation—collective economy.

properties.^{24b} Work and consumption are carried out on the basis of complete equality. The income is divided among the members of the commune equally, without regard to the size of the property contributed by each to the common fund.

A *toz* is an organization in which some of the means of production and the labor force of its members are temporarily socialized for the purpose of carrying out certain kinds of field work. Such collectives are not necessarily characterized by the physical consolidation of the land of their members. The division of income depends upon the amount of labor and equipment contributed by each member to the joint enterprise. Here is found a very slight variation from the individual system of farming. Private property concepts predominate, and the economic inequality among the members of such an agricultural organization remains intact.

The *artel* occupies an intermediary position between the commune and the *toz*. In it the basic means of production are collectivized. With some exceptions, there is complete physical consolidation of the fields held by the members of the *artel*. In the latter group there is preserved a certain degree of economic inequality; first, because a small part of the income is distributed among the members in accordance with the extent of the property contributed by them, and, secondly, because of the divergence existing in the amount of remaining property individually owned by the members, such as gardens, orchards and some cattle. The income is divided according to the quantity and quality of work performed by the members.

Due to the government's assistance and widespread application of the principle of voluntary organization, the total number of collectives in the Soviet Union was 33,258 by the

^{24b} There seems to be, however, an exception to this general rule as indicated by the following excerpt from a recent decree promulgated by the Commissariat of Agriculture of the U.S.S.R. on June 15, 1933: "Each member of an agricultural commune has a right to acquire for his individual economy a cow, small productive live stock and fowl." (*Agricultural Bulletin of the Commissariat of Agriculture of the R.S.F.S.R.*, No. 14.)

This is additional evidence of the recent tendency toward creating an incentive to work by providing the collectivized peasants with a restricted form of individual economy. Other manifestations of this tendency are discussed in the course of this paper.

TABLE I: AVERAGE²⁵

| Republics | Peasant Farms | | | | Cultivated Area (in hectares) | | | |
|------------------|---------------|------|------|------|----------------------------------|------|------|------|
| | 1925 | 1926 | 1927 | 1928 | 1925 | 1926 | 1927 | 1928 |
| R.S.F.S.R. | 12.3 | 15.1 | 19.1 | 14.0 | 52.2 | 73.3 | 63.8 | 50.0 |
| Ukraine | 12.0 | 12.2 | 11.0 | 12.0 | 52.0 | 55.0 | 51.5 | 43.0 |
| White Russia.... | 12.4 | 13.0 | 10.0 | 13.0 | 51.5 | 50.0 | 45.0 | 38.0 |
| U.S.S.R. | 12.1 | 14.0 | 15.5 | 13.7 | 51.2 | 64.1 | 59.0 | 44.5 |

middle of 1928. They included some 416,700 individual peasant farms, embracing a population of 1,982,000 and a cultivated area of 1,388,900 hectares (a hectare is approximately two and a half acres). The percentage of farms collectivized was 1.7, representing 1.6 per cent of the total population and 1.2 per cent of the total cultivated area.²⁶

Considering the average cultivated area of a collective, and the number of farms, horses and large-horned cattle per collective, the smallness of its size becomes apparent. Table I shows but very slight year-to-year increases, and in the case of the year 1928 there are actual decreases in size.

The average figures for the year 1928 (Table II) include all the collectives organized before and during 1928. Comparing the peasant collective farms organized before January 1, 1928 with these organized after that date, we notice a still greater diminution in size.

It is this composition of a collective farm, particularly the size of the cultivated area, that led Iakovlev to the following conclusion: "The amount of land per collective does not permit a successful . . . utilization of modern agricultural machinery . . . even the old collectives [organized before 1928] are made up of land areas not sufficient for the organization of a rational, large-scale economy."²⁷

²⁵ Kulikov, P., "Kontrolnye Tsifry po Kolkhozam na 1928-29" (Control Figures of the Collectives for 1928-29), *Na Agrarnom Fronte* (On the Agrarian Front), No. 12, 1928, p. 25.

²⁶ *Statisticheskii Spravochnik* (Statistical Handbook of U.S.S.R.) 1932, p. 130.

²⁷ Iakovlev, I. A., *Za Kolkhozy* (For the Organization of Collectives) (Moscow, 1929), p. 23.

PER COLLECTIVE

| Horses | | | | Horned Cattle | | | |
|--------|------|------|------|---------------|------|------|------|
| 1925 | 1926 | 1927 | 1928 | 1925 | 1926 | 1927 | 1928 |
| 6.0 | 9.3 | 9.0 | 6.0 | 9.0 | 11.0 | 16.7 | 8.0 |
| 5.3 | 5.3 | 7.3 | 6.0 | 5.3 | 5.2 | 6.9 | 6.1 |
| 8.3 | 8.0 | 6.0 | 5.1 | 16.0 | 15.3 | 12.0 | 14.0 |
| 5.8 | 8.0 | 8.0 | 5.6 | 8.0 | 9.0 | 8.9 | 7.0 |

TABLE II: AVERAGES FOR 1928²⁸

| Regions | Toz | | Artel | | Commune | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| | Popu- lation | Culti- vated Hectares | Popu- lation | Culti- vated Hectares | Popu- lation | Culti- vated Hectares |
| <i>North Western</i> | | | | | | |
| org. before Jan. 1, 1928.. | 45.5 | 21.4 | 35.5 | 29.2 | 47.6 | 60.0 |
| org. after Jan. 1, 1928 ... | 38.4 | 8.1 | 31.9 | 168.0 | 24.1 | 251.0 |
| <i>Central Black Soil</i> | | | | | | |
| org. before Jan. 1, 1928.. | 79.3 | 44.1 | 61.8 | 58.4 | 94.0 | 126.0 |
| org. after Jan. 1, 1928 ... | 77.2 | 11.9 | 71.5 | 21.8 | 71.0 | 49.8 |
| <i>Lower Volga</i> | | | | | | |
| org. before Jan. 1, 1928.. | 69.9 | 66.6 | 38.8 | 64.8 | 48.0 | 138.6 |
| org. after Jan. 1, 1928 ... | 63.7 | 18.8 | 40.9 | 32.0 | 33.0 | 40.0 |
| <i>North Caucasus</i> | | | | | | |
| org. before Jan. 1, 1928.. | 61.2 | 61.3 | 52.4 | 84.1 | 78.9 | 203.9 |
| org. after Jan. 1, 1928 ... | 53.7 | 26.1 | 51.3 | 46.0 | 46.0 | 610.0 |
| <i>Siberia</i> | | | | | | |
| org. before Jan. 1, 1928.. | 65.6 | 68.1 | 59.8 | 86.2 | 89.6 | 168.9 |
| org. after Jan. 1, 1928 ... | 54.9 | 40.3 | 54.6 | 81.9 | 76.4 | 104.0 |
| <i>White Russia</i> | | | | | | |
| org. before Jan. 1, 1928.. | 51.8 | 41.8 | 42.2 | 45.2 | 55.9 | 70.2 |
| org. after Jan. 1, 1928 ... | 36.8 | 5.8 | 32.8 | 15.9 | 39.2 | 34.8 |
| <i>R.S.F.S.R.</i> | | | | | | |
| org. before Jan. 1, 1928.. | 65.8 | 56.6 | 51.5 | 57.7 | 72.3 | 138.3 |
| org. after Jan. 1, 1928 ... | 57.6 | 25.3 | 50.7 | 40.0 | 53.9 | 63.3 |

Of great importance also is the extent to which the collectives were supplied with means of production, the latter including agricultural implements and work animals. Measuring in rubles per cultivated hectare, we notice the degree in which they were underequipped and the extent to which the individual peasant outranked them in this respect (Table III).

²⁸ Kulikov, P., *loc. cit.*, p. 25.

TABLE III: MEANS OF PRODUCTION PER CULTIVATED HECTARE
MEASURED IN RUBLES ²⁹

| | 1925-26 | 1926-27 | 1927-28 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Peasant Farm | 227 | 223 | 226 |
| Collective Farm | 126 | 132 | 120 |

The probable explanation for the low level of the technical base of the collectives is found in the fact that 25 per cent of all the *toszy*, which at that time comprised 59 per cent of the total number of collectives, possessed no means of production of their own. Only half of them had equipment valued at more than a thousand rubles. The same held true for the *artels*, and "only half of the communes [the total number of which comprised but 5 per cent of all the collectives] and a small number of the *artels* and the *toszy* exceeded the limits of a large peasant farm . . . and with the implements at their disposal . . . have begun to carry on a more or less large farm economy."³⁰

The movement was predicated on the rapid development of a new technical base. Lenin believed that "only a material base, technique, the utilization of tractors and machines in agriculture on a large scale"³¹ could change the mentality of the peasant. The tractor was regarded as one of the most important implements in the transition to a new system of agriculture. But on October 1, 1928 the total number of tractors in the country was 26,733, of which about 17,500 were concentrated on the collective farms.³² Due to this small number of tractors, "only one tenth of the newly organized collectives [in 1928] had a sound technical base as measured in terms of tractors."³³ The failure to utilize economically the full capacity of a tractor on the generally small collective, the high

²⁹ Kulikov, P., *loc. cit.*, p. 26.

³⁰ Gaister, A., "Dostizheniia i Trudnosti Kolkhoznogo Stroitelstva" (Achievements and Difficulties in the Formation of Collectives), *Na Agrarnom Fronte*, No. 10, 1928, p. 15.

³¹ Lenin, N., *op. cit.*, vol. XXVI, p. 239.

³² *Statisticheskii Spravochnik (Statistical Handbook of U.S.R.R.)* 1932, p. 145.

³³ Gaister, A., *loc. cit.*, p. 19.

TABLE IV: ECONOMIC STATUS OF COLLECTIVES MEASURED
BY LIVESTOCK EQUIPMENT⁸⁴

| Groups of Farms | Organized in 1928 | Organized before 1928 | Individual Peasant Farms |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Per Cent | Per Cent | Per Cent |
| Without horses | 45 | 45.2 | 30.4 |
| With 1 horse | 47 | 38.3 | 50.2 |
| With 2 horses | 7.0 | 10.6 | 13.8 |
| With 3 horses | 0.5 | 2.7 | 3.5 |
| With 4 horses | 0.5 | 2.6 | 2.1 |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Without cows | 27.9 | 34.8 | 17.9 |
| With 1 cow | 59 | 40.9 | 54.1 |
| With 2 cows | 1.2 | 15.2 | 20.0 |
| With 3 cows | 1.5 | 3.4 | 5.0 |
| With 4 cows | 0.5 | 1.7 | 3.0 |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 |

percentage of tractors out of repair, and the lack of spare parts, created such a situation that, in the Ural Region, for instance, the cost of plowing one *desiatina* (2.7 acres) by tractor was 17 per cent greater than by the use of animal power.⁸⁵ In the fall of 1927 a considerable number of the tractors available in the Tersk and Stavropolsk regions of the North Caucasus, as well as in the district of Samara, could not be utilized at all. Under such conditions the tractor could not serve as a leading organizational element in the new system of agriculture.

Not all of the peasants who joined the collective movement did so because they were eager to realize the ideals of communism in a practical way. It is true that the city workers and the "working intelligentsia" who joined the movement were largely motivated by such an aim. But the majority of the peasants did so primarily because of the smallness of their land holdings and their lack of implements to work their small patches of land. By joining the collectives they were reason-

⁸⁴ Kulikov, P., *loc. cit.*, p. 30.

⁸⁵ Kindeiev, K., "Dostizheniia i Nedostatki Stroitelstva Kolkhozov v RSFSR" (Achievements and Shortcomings in the Formation of Collectives in the RSFSR), *Na Agrarnom Fronte*, No. 5, 1928, p. 104.

ably sure of getting additional land, implements and credits from the state. Judged on the basis of the horses and cows they owned (see Table IV, page 13), the majority of the members of the collectives organized before and during 1928 belonged to the poorest group of the village.

The indicated characteristic features of the greatest number of the peasant collective farms organized within the decade 1918-1928 warrant the conclusion that "the social stratum which feeds the collective movement is composed of the poorest and small-household groups of the village . . . the peasantry for whom there was no possibility to rise to a higher economic level within the frame of their insignificant individual economy."⁸⁶

The shift in the relative importance of the various types of collectives during the decade under consideration is significant. Between 1919 and 1927 the number of communes in the R.S.F.S.R. had decreased by one-half, the number of *artels* had increased by 74 per cent, and the number of *tozy* had increased by 563 per cent.⁸⁷ This trend, which was in evidence throughout the Soviet Union during the first period of collectivization, indicates an unmistakable shift from the type of a collective where the independent peasant autonomy disappears, to the simplest type, where, to a large extent, it remains intact.

Notwithstanding the numerous shortcomings which characterized the work of the collective farms, these have shown an increase of yield per unit of land, as compared with that of the individual farms^{87a} (see Tables V and VI).

The production results of the collectives in the Ural Region are of greater significance.

⁸⁶ Naumov, K., "Voprosy Kolkhoznogo Stroitelstva" (Problems Concerning the Organization of Collectives), *Na Agrarnom Fronte*, No. 5, 1928, p. 6.

⁸⁷ Kindeiev, K., *loc. cit.*, p. 98.

^{87a} The yield figures cited in the course of this paper are, with but few exceptions, general averages for the entire U.S.S.R. Detailed figures on yield, particularly for the years 1930-1932, which would permit a regional study of the productivity of a collective farm vs. an individual farm, did not appear in the sources consulted by the author.

TABLE V: AVERAGE YIELD PER HECTARE ON INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE FARMS OF UKRAINE IN 1927 ⁸⁸

(in quintals; one quintal or centner = 3.7 bushels of 60 pounds)

| | Individual Farm | Tozy | Artels | Communes |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------|--------|----------|
| Winter wheat | 6.91 | 8.47 | 8.76 | 9.79 |
| Spring wheat..... | 9.90 | 11.35 | 13.96 | 15.80 |
| Rye | 9.75 | 10.19 | 12.03 | 13.71 |
| Barley | 6.23 | 7.51 | 7.13 | 7.73 |

TABLE VI: AVERAGE YIELD PER HECTARE ON INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE FARMS OF THE URAL REGION IN 1927 ⁸⁹

(in quintals)

| | Communes | Artels | Tozy | Average for Collectives | Average for Common Individual Farm | Average for Best Peasant Farm |
|------------------|----------|--------|--------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Spring wheat... | 10.77 | 10.98 | 13.31 | 10.89 | 7.73 | 10.97 |
| Percentage | 139.70 | 142.46 | 172.61 | 141.18 | 100.00 | 142.25 |
| Rye | 13.58 | 6.73 | 9.50 | 9.37 | 7.90 | 13.79 |
| Percentage . . . | 171.64 | 68.74 | 120.08 | 118.42 | 100.00 | 174.30 |
| Barley | 10.25 | 16.02 | 16.88 | 12.95 | 10.97 | 16.38 |
| Percentage | 93.4 | 146.00 | 153.9 | 119.2 | 100.00 | 149.25 |

Table VI presents figures for a number of collectives and individual farms picked at random. They show that while the yield per hectare in a collective was still considerably below the yield of the best individual peasant farm, it was much higher than that of the average individual peasant farm.

In general it may be stated that numerically, after a decade of development, the collective farms were only mere specks in the vast horizon of the Russian countryside, that their grain production amounted to only 1.7 per cent of the total grain output, and that the movement had not succeeded in making

⁸⁸ Iakovlev, I. A., *loc. cit.*, p. 51.⁸⁹ Tsylko, F., "Ocherednye Zadachi v Oblasti Kolkhoznogo Stroitelstva" (Current Problems in the Field of Collectivization), *Na Agrarnom Fronte*, Sept. 1928, p. 9.

any appreciable dent in the thick layers of the peasantry. The collective farms still lacked many fundamental prerequisites for an efficient large-scale agricultural economy, but the state's assistance in the form of better land, better seed, greater amount of fertilizer and larger supply of machines, coupled with the pooling of the peasant's means of production, were fruitful of results. They succeeded in yielding larger crops than the average peasant farm. From the Communist point of view this argued well for a policy of a more extensive collectivization.

With the development of the New Economic Policy, the social differentiation in the village reappeared. The Communists believed that this process would lead to results inimical to both the political and the economic development of the Soviet Union. Under the new policies the peasants were being transformed, once more, into producers for a free market. Thus the basis was laid for the appearance of capitalism and class differentiation within the village. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the nationalization of industry, control of credit, monopoly of foreign trade, and the specific measures instituted by the government to limit the process of differentiation failed of their purpose, for capitalism was developing once more in the village. In the light of these developments, Lenin's dictum to the effect that "if there exist small economy and freedom . . . of exchange, capitalism appears,"⁴⁰ withstood the test of time. On the eleventh anniversary of the October Revolution the growth of capitalistic forces in the village was pronounced, if the reëmergence of the "kulak"⁴¹

⁴⁰ Lenin, N., *op. cit.*, vol. XXVI, p. 306.

⁴¹ Note: A committee set up by the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Statistical Office defined a "kulak" as a peasant farmer having one or more of the following characteristics: (1) employment of two agricultural laborers, one of them hired for not less than one half of the year; (2) possession of not less than three head of draft cattle, in some regions not less than four, and the cultivation of more than 10, 12, 14 or 16 desiatins, depending on the region; (3) ownership of a small processing plant with at least one hired laborer, or even without one in case there is a hired laborer in some other branch of the farm; (4) ownership of some commercial enterprise, even without the assistance of a hired man; (5) individual ownership or large

group provides any criterion. Virtually expropriated during the years of War Communism, this group of well-to-do peasants comprised about 10 per cent of the total peasant population by the end of 1927.⁴² This social stratification, particularly as the ranks of the well-to-do groups kept on swelling, was bound to change the entire socio-political orientation in the village. The economic power of the kulak group was considerably greater than their numbers would seem to indicate. They controlled more than one-third of the total means of production in the village, cultivated 23.5 per cent of the entire sown area, and produced 40 per cent of the total amount of grain sold on the market.⁴³

The Soviet Government viewed the situation in the village with great misgivings. It realized that it could not "eliminate the kulaks as a class through taxation and other restrictive measures, while leaving in their hands the means of production and the right of making free use of the land."⁴⁴ The Soviet Government was compelled to acquiesce in a state of affairs where the kulaks played an important rôle in the village, for any other policy was bound to court "sure failure, strengthen the position of kulakism and leave . . . [the State] without grain."⁴⁵ The rich peasants of the Russian village had taken advantage of their strategic position as producers, and by the end of the decade they were a force sufficiently large to warrant serious attention.

The middle-class peasants, the *seredniaki*, who, in 1926, composed 56.4 per cent of the total peasant population,⁴⁶ be-

share ownership of modern agricultural machinery. Larin, I., "Sotsialnaia Struktura S.S.S.R., k Desiatiletiiu Oktiabria" (Social Structure of the U.S.S.R. on the 10th Anniversary of the October Revolution), *Pravda (The Truth)*, Nov. 6-7, 1927.

⁴² *Piatiletii Plan Narodno-Khoziaistvennogo Stroitelstva Strany (The Five-Year Plan for the Economic Reconstruction of the Country)* (Moscow, 1930), vol. II, part I, p. 264.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

⁴⁴ Stalin, J., *Voprosy Leninizma (Problems of Leninism)* (Moscow, 1931), p. 463.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 458.

⁴⁶ Iakovlev, I. A., *K Voprosu o Sotsialisticheskoi Rekonstruktsii Selskogo*

came the central figures in the village. The old agricultural system revolved about them. The aim of the Communists was to cultivate in them the element of the toiler at the expense of the seller, and to draw them gradually into the ranks of the builders of socialism. But at this very time the sellers' proclivities asserted themselves with greater force than ever before, due largely to the government's policy of maintaining a high price level for manufactured goods and a corresponding low price for agricultural products. The so-called "scissors" problem, which has characterized Soviet economics for many years now, found its expression in this inequitable price disparity between manufactured goods and the products of the village. It is true that the "scissors" contributed much toward the rehabilitation of Soviet industry, but in view of the fact that this industrial growth was achieved largely at the expense of the village, it accentuated the already existing schism between the interests of the city and those of the village. All efforts on the part of the Soviet Government to effect a close working union with the great mass of the middle peasantry were, for the time being, unavailing. In the quiet but grim economic struggle with the city, this most important section of the village identified its economic and political interests with the kulaks rather than with the proletarian state. Under these circumstances, eleven years after the October Revolution, there was ample justification for Lenin's statement made in 1921 to the effect that the village, after the Revolution, became more petit-bourgeois and as such represented "an independent class which after the crushing defeat and expulsion of the landed nobility and the capitalists, remains as the only class capable of challenging the political supremacy of the proletariat."⁴⁷

The industrial progress attained by 1928 had fundamentally changed the relative position of industry and the prevailing system of agriculture. Although agriculture in the Soviet

Khoziaistva (On the Problem of Socialist Reconstruction of Agriculture) (Leningrad, 1928), p. 1. Iakovlev defines a middle peasant as one who cultivates from two to eight "desiatins" of land and owns from one to two head of work animals.

⁴⁷ Lenin, N., *op. cit.*, vol. XXII, p. 289.

Union during its best years, 1925-1927, showed a year-to-year increase in its aggregate commodity production, its rate of progress was slower than that of industry. Whereas in 1926-1927 Soviet industry exceeded the prewar production level, the total agricultural production for the same year was only 88.1 per cent of that of 1913.⁴⁸ The agricultural production in 1926-1927 was 30 per cent greater than that of 1923-1924, but the percentage of marketable grain was even slightly less than in the earlier year.⁴⁹ This seemingly paradoxical situation is probably traceable to the refusal of the peasants to part with their produce at low prices. The generally slow progress in agriculture was traced by the Soviet Government not so much to the dissatisfaction of the peasants with the government's price policy as to the general break-up of the large estates and some of the large peasant farms into smaller and smaller units, where economic farming was impossible. Even if the price relationship had not adversely affected the development of agriculture, the existing system of small peasant farms producing 11 bushels of wheat and 4.5 bushels of barley as compared with 17 bushels of wheat and 9 bushels of barley per acre formerly produced on the large estates, was bound to slow up the development of agriculture and to curtail the amount of marketable grain.⁵⁰

The existing situation cannot be properly evaluated apart from its relationship to the vast scheme of industrialization of the country. If the existing tendencies in agriculture were allowed to proceed unchecked, the program of industrialization would be jeopardized. The fulfillment of the program depended upon importation of machinery and of a great variety of raw materials from abroad. Soviet Russia, however, had not sufficient gold and was unable to procure long-term credits abroad to finance her purchases. The only way out was to finance imports with the proceeds from exports, primarily the export of agricultural products which had always played an

⁴⁸ Iakovlev, I., *loc. cit.*, p. 357.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 352.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 353. ("Poods" and "desiatins" converted into bushels and acres on the basis of: 1 pood = .6 bushels of 60 pounds, and 1 desiatina = 2.7 acres).

important rôle in Russia's foreign trade, accounting for 73.7 per cent of the gross Russian export in 1913.⁵¹ In 1924 Soviet industry was started on the road toward rehabilitation because the Soviet Union was thus able to pay for the imported machines.⁵²

Three years later, confronted with a vastly greater and more significant industrial plan, the Fifteenth Party Congress expressed its dissatisfaction with the agricultural situation in the following resolution: "The backwardness [of the old system of agriculture] hampers . . . the export of agricultural products which is the basis of import operations necessary for a more rapid industrialization of the country, and the further development of agriculture itself."⁵³ In other words, agriculture was still looked upon as the main item upon which the import plan had to be based. But in 1927 the relative importance of agricultural products in the total mass of exports declined from 73.7 per cent to 57 per cent, and to 46 per cent in 1928.⁵⁴ The year 1928, when the Five-Year-Plan had assumed concrete form, ended with a 20 per cent decrease in agricultural exports.⁵⁵ This decline of Soviet Russia's main item of export, along with the growing grain shortage in the cities and industrial centers, threatened to undermine the main pillars upon which the Plan rested.

Immediately prior to the inauguration of the vast program of industrialization it became obvious that the prevailing system of small-scale agriculture failed to meet the demands made upon it. With the system left intact, the situation was bound to become worse with the application of the Five-Year-Plan. From the point of view of the existing economic rela-

⁵¹ *Statisticheskii Spravochnik (Statistical Handbook of the U.S.S.R.)* 1932, p. 392.

⁵² Popov, L. L., "Osnovy Perspektivnogo Plana Razvitiia Selskogo Lesnogo Khoziaistva" (The Basis of the Tentative Plan for the Development of Agricultural and Forest Economy), *Planovoe Khoziaistvo (Planned Economy)* (Moscow, Aug. 1925), p. 19.

⁵³ *Pravda*, December 21, 1927.

⁵⁴ *Statisticheskii Spravochnik S.S.S.R. za 1928 (Statistical Handbook of the U.S.S.R. for 1928)* (Moscow, 1929), p. 719.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 719.

tionship between the city and the village at the end of the decade 1918-1928, the former was moving toward a socialist form of industrial organization; the latter, toward a capitalistic form. Industry and agriculture did not constitute a single national economic whole. Notwithstanding the fact that the land was owned by the state, the city with its large centralized and partly socialized industry had its antithesis in the small and extremely backward individualistic system of peasant farming. From the Communist point of view this was an economic anachronism which "would some day end in a complete breakdown of the entire national economy,"⁵⁶ if it were not corrected. Only a system of large-scale mechanized agriculture could avert such an outcome. But this was to be realized not through the introduction into the village of capitalistic large-scale enterprise, but, on the contrary, by the eradication of all its vestiges. And the Communist Party decided that the surest way of achieving this end was the further consolidation of the small farms into large ones equipped with modern machinery. Therein lay the guarantee that the problem of "either back to capitalism or forward to socialism"⁵⁷ would be solved in favor of the latter alternative.

It was during the deliberations of the Fifteenth Party Congress, held in Moscow in December 1927, that the general principles underlying the Five-Year-Plan were outlined. The direction of the future development of agriculture was one of the major considerations in the preliminary outline of the Plan. In his report to the Congress, "On the Work in the Village", V. N. Molotov, then member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, subjected the rural question to a searching analysis. He pointed out, among other things, that the very important land-organization problem in the village was yet to be solved, that five million wooden plows were still in use, and that the economic status of eight million farms was such that not even one horse per farm could be utilized economically.⁵⁸ Molotov contended that notwithstanding the numerous deficiencies of the existing collectives they had shown themselves

⁵⁶ Stalin, J., *op. cit.*, p. 444.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 445.

⁵⁸ *Pravda*, Dec. 27, 1927.

to be of real value, and should the collective movement overcome the difficulties with which it was beset during the past years, the progressive development of the peasant collective farms would be assured. To achieve this, the collective movement must follow the specifications of the Five-Year-Plan in Agriculture, as coöordinated with the general plan for industrialization.

The "Maximum" Plan for Agriculture⁶⁰ which was finally adopted by the Sixteenth All-Union Conference of the Communist Party on April 29, 1929,⁶⁰ had as its objective the partial reorganization of the village along socialistic lines. In the words of the authors, "The Plan aims to create during the five-year period a socialized producing area to counter-balance the upper [village] stratum of the individual farmers."⁶¹ It was indicated that even at the end of this period the individual peasant farms and not the collectives would still play the chief rôle in the raising of agricultural products.⁶² It is around this general premise that the agricultural Plan was built.

Recognizing that the machine was to serve as the means with which to achieve economic and social transformation in the village, the Plan provided that 120,000 tractors should be at the disposal of the collectives by the end of the period.⁶³ This number of tractors was considered sufficient to mechanize seventy-five per cent of the twenty million hectares which were to be collectivized by 1932-33.⁶⁴ The remainder of the collectivized area was to be worked with animal power.

The demands of large-scale mechanized agriculture could

⁶⁰ The general Five-Year-Plan was proposed in two drafts: The "Maximum" and the "Directive", or minimum. The first was based on the assumption that during the five-year period the harvests would be generally good, with production both in industry and agriculture showing a general increase. The "directive" draft, on the other hand, allowed for at least one poor harvest and a slower rise in physical output in general and in agriculture in particular.

⁶¹ *Pravda*, April 30, 1929.

⁶² *Piatiletii Plan Narodno-Khoziaistvennogo Stroitelstva Strany (The Five-Year-Plan for the Economic Reconstruction of the Country)*, vol. II, part I, pp. 265-6.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

not be met by the introduction of machinery alone when the labor supply available was accustomed to a centuries-old economy of hand-plow and sickle. To do away with these old methods, and to insure the success of industrialization of agriculture, the collectives had to be supplied with well-trained specialists. The total number of persons with special agricultural training by the middle of 1929 was 44,198.⁶⁵ Out of this number only 11.4 per cent were specialists in the field of mechanized agriculture; 11.2 per cent, livestock specialists; and 77.4 per cent, general all-round agronomists.⁶⁶ The available number of specialists was too small to satisfy the ever-growing need of agriculture. Moreover, from a qualitative point of view, many of these old-type agronomists, who were accustomed to serve the needs of small peasant farms, were in need of reeducation in harmony with the newly created large collectives. There was a demand for a "new type of specialist, an agronomist-engineer who must have a minimum knowledge in technology and mechanics" and, in addition to this, "knowledge of agricultural processes."⁶⁷ The Plan therefore aimed to treble the number of such specialists as well as to acquaint five million peasants with the basic principles of agricultural science.⁶⁸

Cognizant of the fact that it would be enormously difficult to collectivize a large area through the organization of small collectives, and that to attempt to do so would further complicate the already intricate problem of land organization, the Plan called for the organization of large collectives. The figures on the following page (Table VII) show the change in the size of the collectives as the Plan neared its completion.

The plan also provided that by the end of the five-year period the average rise in yield per hectare throughout the Soviet Union should not be less than thirty-five per cent.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Iezhev, N., "Selskokhozistvennye Kadry" (Agricultural Experts), *Na Agrarnom Fronte*, No. 2, 1930, p. 22.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁶⁷ *Piatiletii Plan Narodno-Khozistvennogo Stroitelstva Strany* (The Five-Year-Plan for the Economic Reconstruction of the Country), vol. II, part 1, p. 308.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

TABLE VII: INCREASED SIZE OF COLLECTIVES⁷⁰

| Size of Collectives | Percentage of Total | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|------|
| | 1928 | 1933 |
| Not more than 100 hectares | 44 | 7 |
| Not more than 101-400 hectares | 28 | 23 |
| Not more than 401-800 hectares | 14 | 26 |
| Not more than 801-1200 hectares | 12 | 23 |
| 1201 hectares and more | 2 | 21 |

It should be noted that the authors did not consider the problem of increases in yield as primarily a technical one, but felt rather that "a thirty-five percent rise in yield is first of all an organizational problem . . . because from a purely technical point of view there are no obstacles in the way of doubling the yield."⁷¹ The average grain yield per collectivized hectare in 1927-1928 was 8.37 quintals.⁷² Hence, the average grain yield per hectare of 11.28 quintals,⁷³ expected during the last year of the Plan, must be looked upon as a modest one indeed.

With the rise in yield the total grain production of the collectives would be 119.5 million quintals in 1932-1933, and fully 49 per cent of this would be available for the market.⁷⁴ It was estimated that by 1932-1933 the collectives and the State farms together would supply about 39 per cent of the grain available for the market. This constituted approximately the amount of grain sold by the upper stratum of the village in 1927-1928. Such a result, the authors of the Plan believed, would be of considerable social and economic significance, since the amount of marketable grain offered by the socialized sector would diminish the possibility of grain speculation by the kulaks, besides weakening their power to challenge the state system of regulation of grain prices and grain supply.

As to the extent of socialization of the fields and agricultural implements of those peasants who joined the collectives, it was expected that by the end of the five-year period 80 per

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 328.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 329.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 328-29.

cent of all their fields and 75 per cent of all their agricultural implements would be socialized. The socialization of animal power was to proceed at a slower pace. Any accomplishment in this field depended upon a considerable capital outlay for the construction and equipment of special barnyards. The necessary funds were to be furnished largely from the capital accumulations accruing from the socialized fields of the collectives. Since it was planned that the greater number of collectives would be organized during the second half of the five-year period, large capital accumulations were not expected. It was with these considerations in mind that the authors of the Plan decided that only 50 per cent of the animal power belonging to the peasants who entered the collectives would be socialized by the year 1932-33.⁷⁵

Such, in brief, were the main provisions of the Plan for the collectivization of agriculture.

In the beginning of June 1929 four per cent of the total number of farms were collectivized, covering an area of 4,185,000 hectares, with a population of 4,666,000.⁷⁶ Within the next four months these figures were practically doubled. But it was only after October 1929 that the collective movement began to grow at a very rapid pace and soon assumed such forms and displayed such tendencies that the period now stands out as a most significant one in the history of the movement. Stalin saw in the rapid growth of the collectives the solution of the chief economic and political problems of the Soviet Union: "Should the collective movement proceed at the same rate, the scissors problem would be solved in the nearest future . . . the relationship between the city and the village would be set upon a new basis and the contradiction between the city and the village would be washed away at an accelerated pace."⁷⁷ Collectivization of small groups of farms

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

⁷⁶ *Statisticheskii Spravochnik (Statistical Handbook of the U.S.S.R.)* 1932, p. 131.

⁷⁷ Stalin, J., *Voprosy Leninizma (Problems of Leninism)* (Moscow, 1931), p. 453. The statement was originally made in the course of a speech on Soviet agricultural policies delivered December 2, 1929.

was essentially a matter of the past. This was the period when organizing collectives which embraced entire villages and covered vast stretches of land became the order of the day.

The growth of the collective movement was much faster than the Plan had anticipated. Nine months after its inauguration, on January 5, 1930, the Communist Party announced that "the tempo of the development of the collective movement as indicated by the Plan, has been exceeded . . . The Five-Year-Plan . . . which provided for the collectivization of 22-24 million hectares by the year 1932-33, would be considerably overfulfilled this year."⁷⁸ As to the future development of the movement, this decree issued by the Communist Party provided for a complete collectivization of all the peasant farms before the expiration of the five-year limit. Such important grain-growing regions as North Caucasus, Ukraine, and the Middle and Lower Volga were to be completely collectivized by the fall of 1930, or not later than the spring of 1931. In the case of the other grain-growing regions, the task was to be accomplished by the fall of 1931, or spring of 1932.

The acceleration in collectivization which developed during the following six weeks proved that the decree had underestimated the driving force behind the movement. With a grim determination which brooked no opposition and recognized no obstacles, those who directed the work proceeded to shift a great body of the peasantry into the collectives. The city workers and the members of the Communist Party sent to the village received instructions to the effect that they need not devote their efforts to convincing the peasants that collective farming was more advantageous than individual farming, for it was felt that the peasants were already convinced of that.⁷⁹

These instructions were vigorously followed.

How the main grain-growing regions were affected may be

⁷⁸ "O Tempe Kollektivizatsii i Merakh Pomoshchi Gosudarstva Kolkhoznomu Stroitelstvu" (Concerning the Tempo of Collectivization and Measures of State Assistance to the Collective Movement), *Pravda*, Jan. 6, 1930.

⁷⁹ Iakovlev, I., "Doklad—Moskovskim Rabochim Uezhaiushchim na Rabotu v Kolkhozy" (Report made by Iakovlev to a group of Moscow workers leaving for work in the collectives), *Pravda*, Jan. 24, 1930.

gleaned from the fact that by March 1, 1930, in the Ukraine, North Caucasus, Lower and Middle Volga, Central Black-Soil Region and Crimea, the number of collectivized farms as a percentage of total number of farms reached 55, 77, 68, 56, 82 and 76, respectively.⁸⁰ The pace at which collectivization proceeded throughout the U.S.S.R. is shown by Table VIII.

TABLE VIII: THE TEMPO OF COLLECTIVIZATION IN 1930⁸¹

| 1930 | Collectives Organized | Peasant Farms | Collective Farms as % of Total Number of Peasant Farms as of Spring, 1929 |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---|
| Jan. 20, 1930..... | 59,400 | 4,393,100 | 21.6 % |
| Feb. 1, 1930..... | 87,500 | 8,015,100 | 32.5 % |
| Feb. 10, 1930..... | 103,700 | 10,935,300 | 42.4 % |
| Feb. 20, 1930..... | 108,800 | 13,675,900 | 52.7 % |
| March 1, 1930..... | 110,200 | 14,264,300 | 55.0 % |

It is to be noted that for ten days, January 20—February 1, the number of peasant farms which were drawn into the collectives almost doubled, and by March 1 of the same year, more than half of all the peasant farms were consolidated into collective farms. In a word, this was the period when collectivization in some regions "jumped from 10 to 90 per cent in a few days."⁸²

The rapid growth of collectivization was followed by an increase in the size of the collective farms. The figures given in Table IX (page 28) show the change in this direction.

During this period there took place a considerable socialization of the animal power of the peasants who joined the collectives. On January 20, 1930, 17 per cent of all the draft cattle in the collectives were socialized; on February 1, the figure had risen to 52 per cent; ten days later the percentage

⁸⁰ From the Bulletin of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture, *Izvestiia* (*The News*), March 9, 1930.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² "O Borbe s Iskrivleniami Partii v Kolkhoznom Dvizhenii" (Concerning the Struggle against Party Distortions in the Collective Movement), *Pravda*, March 15, 1930.

TABLE IX: AVERAGE SIZE OF COLLECTIVE FARM FOR THE ENTIRE U.S.S.R. ⁸³

| Date | Average Number of Farms per Collective | Average Number of Hectares per Collective |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| June 1, 1929 | 17.6 | 105.6 |
| October 1, 1929 | 23.3 | 139.8 |
| January 20, 1930 | 73.9 | 525.9 |
| February 1, 1930 | 91.5 | 602.3 |
| February 10, 1930 | 105.4 | 672.8 |
| February 20, 1930 | 125.6 | 759.6 |
| March 1, 1930 | 129.2 | 797.4 |

had risen to 81, and by March 1 the figure was 77.⁸⁴ This upward surge was characteristic not only of the highest form of collective organization, the agricultural commune, but of the *artel* and the simplest form of collective, the *toz*, as well.

Mass collectivization was the new form of the collective movement, and its success, measured from the Communist point of view, was expressed not only in the large percentages, but also in the new social "face" of a collective of this period. The collective no longer represented only the poor section of the village but also a number of middle-peasants. The increased importance of this group was regarded as a significant factor in the development of the movement, for the Communists believed that socialism could not be built in the village without the support of this group.

Some of the middle-peasants who entered the collectives were mindful of the state privileges enjoyed by the members. The nature of these special rights was stated in the Land Code of December 15, 1928.⁸⁵ According to this code the segre-

⁸³ The figures for the dates, June 1, 1929 and October 1, 1929, are taken from Tsylko, F., "Osnovnye Vekhi Kolkhoznogo Dvizheniya" (Milestones in the Development of the Collective Movement), *Na Agrarnom Fronte*, No. 5, 1930, p. 21. The other figures are taken from the Bulletin of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture, *Izvestiia*, March 9, 1930.

⁸⁴ Bulletin of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture, *Izvestiia*, March 9, 1930.

⁸⁵ *Obshchie Nachala Zemlepolzovaniia i Zemleustroistva* (General Principles Concerning the Use of Land and of Land Organization), Collection of Statutes of the U.S.S.R. for 1928, Part I, Statute No. 642.

gation of land into separate individual farms was made very difficult, but the segregation of land for collectives was facilitated and encouraged (Paragraphs 15 and 19). The collectives were given preferential rights in securing available land (Par. 8), as well as special privileges in the matter of payment of the Single Agricultural Tax and in securing long-term credits (Par. 30, *a* and *b*). They were the first to be supplied by the State, and on more favorable terms than the individual farmers, with modern agricultural machines and implements, fertilizers, seeds and livestock (Par. 30, *e*).

A large number of peasants of the middle group were not tempted into the collectives by these privileges. They joined them, however, under the pressure of adverse economic forces, and, as was later fully admitted,⁸⁶ under the pressure of purely administrative measures. The middle-peasants were primarily producers for the market, and once the widespread, if unofficial, attack was launched against the still lingering vestiges of the New Economic Policy, i. e., against the continued existence of a free market, the economic foundation of those peasants was undermined. Faced with a situation which left this system of agriculture economically insecure, many peasants thought the best way out was to exchange what was no longer a profitable or secure system, for a system of agriculture which was backed by the full authority of the Soviet Government. Furthermore, in the absence of a rigorous distinction between the middle-peasant and the kulak, and in view of the general persecution leveled against the latter group, many of the middle peasants, to escape persecution, deemed it expedient to join the collective movement.

The keynote of this period of collectivization was the relentless war waged by the Communists against the well-to-do section of the village. Stalin's speech dealing with the agrarian policy of Soviet Russia sounded the battle-cry. "Now", he said, "we have a sufficiently strong material base for an attack against 'kulakism', to break down its opposition and to liquidate the kulaks as a class."⁸⁷ In his opinion, mass collectivization is based on the complete annihilation of the class enemy,

⁸⁶ Cf. *infra*, p. 36.

⁸⁷ Stalin, J., *op. cit.*, p. 458.

"de-kulakization in regions of mass collectivization . . . having now become a component part of the organization and development of the collectives."⁸⁸ Shortly afterward, the government, in a brief but momentous decree, pronounced the doom of the prosperous section of the village when it granted the right to the regional governments and the autonomous republics, "to use . . . all the necessary measures in the struggle against the kulaks, including complete confiscation of their property and deportations from certain regions and provinces."⁸⁹ Some of the Bolshevik leaders, especially those who knew the village intimately, realized the harshness of the measure, but there was nothing which could change that, since "this follows from mass collectivization with relentless precision."⁹⁰

This course did not stem from political considerations alone. The considerable economic power concentrated in the hands of the well-to-do peasants counted heavily in the course of action decided upon by the Bolshevik leaders. The confiscation of kulak property became a means of strengthening the material base of the collectives. From 25 to 40 per cent of all the indivisible capital funds of the collective farms organized by May 1, 1930, consisted of such property.⁹¹ The means of production of some of the kulaks, their farm buildings, and in general all the property that could be utilized in a collec-

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 459.

⁸⁹ *O Meropriyatiakh po Ukrepleniiu Sotsialisticheskogo Pereustroistva Selskogo Khoziaistva v Raionakh Sploshnoi Kollectivizatsii i po Borbe s Kulakostvom* (*Concerning the Measures of Strengthening the Socialist Reconstruction of Agriculture in the Regions of Mass Collectivization, and the Measures Undertaken in the Struggle against Kulakism*). Issued Feb. 1, 1930, by the Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R.

⁹⁰ Kalinin, M. I., "Doklad na Obedinennom Zasedanii Zentralnogo Chernozemnogo Oblastnogo Ispolnitelnogo Komiteta i Voronezhskogo Gorodskogo Soveta Rabochikh i Krasnoarmeiskikh Deputatov" (Report made to the Joint Session of the Central Black Soil Regional Executive Committee and the Voronezh City Council of Workers and Red Army Deputies), *Pravda*, March 3, 1930.

⁹¹ *Kolkhozy Nakanune Shestnadzatogo Sezda Partii* (*On the Eve of the Sixteenth Congress of the Communist Party*) (published by Plankhozgiz, Moscow, 1930), p. 29.

tive, was socialized. The confiscated funds were distributed among the poor peasants for the purpose of enabling them to make their share payments upon joining a collective.⁹² The figures that would indicate just how many kulaks were "liquidated" in that comparatively short period are not available, but between the inception of this process and the middle of 1931, the kulak population decreased from 5,400,000 to 1,600,000.⁹³

However desirable, from the Communist viewpoint, were the social changes in village life which resulted from the rapid collectivization of agriculture, this very pace, nevertheless, brought in its wake features which affected most adversely the collective movement of the years that followed.

By March 1930 it was almost impossible to point out a region not affected by mass collectivization. Stalin's dictum that "before determining the tempo and method of organizing collectives one must carefully consider the variety of factors peculiar to the regions of the U.S.S.R." was announced after the numerical growth of the collectives had reached unprecedented heights.⁹⁴ The fact that a particular section of the country did not lend itself to this form of collectivization was of no significance to the local authorities eagerly competing for larger percentages. Many of the collectives were being organized in a purely mechanical fashion and later came to be known as "paper collectives." Such regions as Moscow, White Russia and the Tartar Republic, where conditions conducive to a rapid tempo of collectivization were totally lacking, managed, nevertheless, to be in the forefront of the movement. But the collectives of these very regions could not register any achievement in organizational work. Qualitative

⁹² "Kak Proizvoditsa na Mestakh Raskulachivanie" (How De-kulakization Takes Place in the Village), *Pravda*, January 31, 1930. See also Averiev, V., "O Dvukh Etapakh Raskulachivaniia" (Concerning Two Stages of De-kulakization), *Na Agrarnom Fronte*, No. 6, 1930.

⁹³ *Social Economic Planning in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics*, p. 121. Report of the Delegation from the U.S.S.R. to the World Social Economic Congress, Amsterdam, August 23-29, 1931.

⁹⁴ Stalin, J., "Golovokruzhenie ot Uspekha" (Dizziness from Success), *Pravda*, March 2, 1930.

factors were sacrificed for the sake of quantitative results. This explains why shortly afterward the decline of such collectives was as rapid as their rise.

Just as the organizers of the new collectives assumed that the various provinces of the Soviet Union were equally well suited for mass collectivization, so did they ignore the basic difference among the various types of collectives—the degree of socialization carried on within each type. The organizers insisted on socializing everything in sight. Reduced to its essentials, this policy meant turning the newly organized collectives into agricultural communes overnight, or "jumping" into the highest form of collectivization. It also meant that there was demanded of the politically and economically backward peasant a communistic way of life which was ideologically too advanced even for the most class-conscious and trusted workers of the industrial centers.

The reactions of the peasants to these methods were not slow in coming. They voiced their protest in a manner which did not fail to impress the central government with the seriousness of the situation. The peasants launched a campaign of wholesale slaughter of their cattle. The official decrees dealing with this situation reveal the significant fact that not only the kulaks but the middle-peasants, too, distinguished themselves in this campaign.⁹⁵ The well-to-do peasants realized that economically they could not survive the fierce attack leveled against them by the Soviet Government. With little or no property on their hands there was a greater likelihood of avoiding all the privations which went with the application of the process of de-kulakization, and of even joining, per-

⁹⁵ *O Merakh Borby s Khishchnicheskim Uboem Skota (Concerning the Measures in the Struggle against the Criminal Slaughter of Cattle)*, issued by the Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R., February 16, 1930.

Mery Borby s Rasprodashei Selskokhoziaistvennogo Inventaria, Rabochego i Polzovatelnogo Skota Krestianskimi Khoziaistvami, Vstupaiushchimi v Kolkhozy i Drugie Selskokhoziaistvennye Proizvodstvennye Obedineniia (Measures against Selling by the Peasants of Their Agricultural Implements, Draft Cattle and Barnyard Livestock before Joining the Collectives or Any Other Agricultural Producing Coöperatives), issued by the Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars of the R.S.F.S.R. on Jan. 16, 1930.

chance, a collective farm. Hence, in order to escape the fate of those whose property had already been confiscated, they preferred to slaughter their livestock and sell their agricultural implements.

There were a number of reasons why many peasants of the middle group decided to emulate, in this respect, the upper stratum of the village. First, at the time when the collective movement was marching forward in "seven-league-boots", an attempt was being made to socialize all the livestock of the collectivized peasants, despite the absence of proper facilities, insufficient supplies of fodder, and almost complete lack of practical knowledge concerning livestock socialization on a large scale. It was quite obvious to the peasants that their livestock could not thrive under such precarious conditions. Second, the price paid for the livestock to be socialized was too small in comparison with the price on the open market. For instance, a horse which could be sold for 100 rubles on the open market, was priced by the collective at 25-30 rubles.⁹⁶ Third, as a means of attracting a great number of peasants into the collectives, they were told, in many regions, that "mass collectivization is based upon the supply to the peasant of, if not 100 per cent, then at least a considerable amount of mechanical power, agricultural machinery and other implements."⁹⁷ Finally, during the period under consideration the share of income of a member of a collective did not depend upon the total amount of livestock he would contribute to the socialized fund. In view of the enumerated circumstances many peasants preferred to slaughter their cattle rather than deliver them to the collective. The figures in Table X (page 34) indicate the extent of this form of sabotage.

This huge loss, which can be restored only after years of patient work, helps to explain the difficulties experienced by the state to this date in supplying the population with meat products, and some branches of the light industries with raw materials. But the slaughter of livestock assumes special sig-

⁹⁶ Solomon, M., "V Raionakh Sploshnoi Kollektivizatsii" (In the Regions of Mass Collectivization), *Planovoe Khoziaistvo (Planned Economy)*, No. 2, 1930, p. 235.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

TABLE X: TOTAL LIVE STOCK IN THE U.S.S.R. 1928-1930 ⁹⁸
(in thousands)

| Year | Horses | Horned Cattle (including cows) | Cows | Hogs | Sheep and Goats |
|--|--------|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|-----------------|
| 1928 | 33,534 | 70,540 | 30,741 | 25,989 | 146,699 |
| 1929 | 34,638 | 67,112 | 30,360 | 20,384 | 146,776 |
| 1930 | 30,768 | 53,962 | 26,749 | 13,332 | 113,171 |
| (in percentages of the preceding year) | | | | | |
| 1929 | 103.3 | 95.1 | 98.8 | 78.4 | 100.1 |
| 1930 | 88.4 | 80.3 | 87.9 | 64.9 | 77.2 |

nificance when one considers the technical base upon which the collectives of that period were built.

From the Communist point of view one of the main economic advantages of a collective system over small individual farming lies in extensive and intensive utilization of modern agricultural machinery. Only on this basis could the economic and social revolution in the village be accomplished. The authors of the Plan seem to have proceeded on this assumption. They stated that while it was possible to increase agricultural production by the mere pooling of the peasants' simple implements, "significant social shifts in agriculture cannot be accomplished without tractorization."⁹⁹ In this connection it may be recalled that the Plan provided for 120,000 tractors to work 15 million hectares of land, one tractor per 125 collectivized hectares. The supply of tractors, both through purchases abroad and home production, did not keep pace with the growth of collectivization in the spring of 1930. At this time the peasant collective farms covered an area of 33 million hectares, whereas the total number of tractors on the collectives amounted to about 39 thousand.¹⁰⁰ Considering that only 11.6

⁹⁸ *Statisticheskii Spravochnik (Statistical Handbook of the U.S.S.R.)* 1932, p. 191.

⁹⁹ *Piatiletний Plan Narodno-Khoziaistvennogo Stroitelstva Strany (The Five-Year Plan for the Economic Reconstruction of the Country)* (Moscow, 1930), vol. II, part I, p. 267.

¹⁰⁰ Nikulikhiu, Ia. and Karavaev, A., editors, *Tekhnicheskoe Peresvoruzhenie Kolkhozov (Technical Requipment of the Collectives)* (Selkolkhozgiz, Moscow, 1931), p. 33.

per cent of all the collective farms were equipped with tractors,¹⁰¹ the technical base of the huge collectivized area consisted primarily of the peasants' simple means of production, including their considerably depleted livestock.

Successful large-scale farming was conditioned also upon an efficient system of the organization of labor. Was this possible under the circumstances prevailing in the collectives in the spring of 1930? The answer may be gleaned from the following statement of the Commissar of Agriculture, Iakovlev: "On the basis of our investigations we insist categorically that the idea of achieving any kind of success in peasant farming outside of mass mechanization is a sheer phantasmagoria because only mechanization will supply the basis for a rational system of organization of labor."¹⁰² The extent to which they had fallen short of achieving the latter goal may be inferred from a study of the effectiveness of the newly organized collectives in terms of yield per hectare. A comparison of per-hectare yields on private and collective farms reveals that while in 1928 a collectivized hectare produced 10 per cent more grain than one hectare on a private farm, in 1930 the difference was reduced to 6 per cent.¹⁰³ In the light of these results, Iakovlev's comment to the effect that the peasants had learned how to utilize the advantages of a collective for the purpose of extending the cultivated area, but "had not yet learned how to utilize these advantages for an increase in yield,"¹⁰⁴ is very much in point.

The Communists did not seem then to regard the inadequate

¹⁰¹ *Kolkhozy Nakannune, XVI Siezda Partii* (Collectives on the Eve of the Sixteenth Congress of the Communist Party) (Plankhozgiz, Moscow, 1930), p. 62.

¹⁰² Iakovlev, I. S., editor, *K Voprosu o Sozialisticheskem Pereustroistve Selskogo Khoziaistva* (Concerning the Problem of Socialist Reconstruction of Agriculture) (Leningrad, 1928); the quotation is from the preface written by Iakovlev, p. xxxvii.

¹⁰³ *Economic Handbook of the Soviet Union* (American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, New York, 1931), p. 66.

¹⁰⁴ Odinets, P., "Rukovodstvo Kolkhozami" (Managing the Collective Farms), *Sovetskoe Stroitelstvo* (Soviet Construction), January 1932, p. 17. The author quotes from Iakovlev's address before the meeting of the Collegium of the Commissariat for Agriculture held in October 1930.

technical base of the collectives as a possible handicap in the development of the collective movement. In fact, the Central Committee of the Party felt it necessary to emphasize "the need of a determined struggle against all attempts to slow down the collective movement because of lack of tractors and of modern agricultural machinery."¹⁰⁵ The Party therefore rejected and branded as counter-revolutionary Trotsky's dictum that, "From peasants' nags and wooden plows, however, combined, you cannot create large-scale farming any more than a combination of fishermen's rowboats can make a steamer."¹⁰⁶

The insistence on collectivization at top speed on any base led, from the Communist point of view, to a very incongruous situation in the collectives: the existence of a new form of ownership within virtually the old frame of production methods. From a practical point of view this relationship hampered the normal development of the collectives. It is one thing to cultivate vast tracts of land with standardized modern machines, but it was an entirely different and more difficult matter to work the same land with a variety of simple implements. The pace at which collectivization was proceeding, coupled with a lack of managerial experience, led to the instability even of a number of those collectives which were provided with machines. But it was still more difficult to organize, manage, maintain discipline in, and by this token, to stabilize a collective the technical base of which was for the most part a conglomeration of inadequate peasant equipment.

The methods of collectivization prevalent at the end of 1929 and in the beginning of 1930 were expressed

in measures of force and compulsion applied to the middle and poor peasants during the formation of the collective farms; in the socialization of the barnyard stock and cows belonging to the members of the artels . . . sufficient only for their own

¹⁰⁵ "O Tempe Kollektivizatsii i Merakh Pomoshchii Gosudarstva Kolkhoznomu Stroitelstvu" (On the Tempo of Collectivization and Measures of State Assistance to the Collective Movement), *Pravda*, Jan. 6, 1930.

¹⁰⁶ Iakovlev, I. A., *Red Villages* (New York, 1931), p. 38. Quotation from an editorial by Trotsky in the February-March 1930 issue of *Bulletin of the Opposition*.

household requirements . . . in the premature creation of the communes, without the requisite material and organizational preparation . . . in gross and ultra-administrative methods exercised in relation to the collective farms and their members . . . in ignoring the middle peasant and failing to use his agricultural experience and in applying to him the methods of struggle used against the kulaks (de-kulakization, disfranchisement, etc.).¹⁰⁷

This was a violation of the concepts upon which the Communists originally intended to build the collectives and weld into a harmonious whole the interests of the peasants and the workers. Those concepts had more than a merely academic or theoretical significance; they bore directly upon the final outcome of the collective movement and the general socialist reconstruction of the country. Therefore, when the government, under the pressure of the peasants' protests, finally realized that to disregard Lenin's policies "would lead . . . directly to the destruction of the collective movement, to a disagreement with the middle peasantry, . . . to a disorganization of our ranks, to the weakening of our entire socialist reconstruction,"¹⁰⁸ the methods of collectivization underwent a considerable change. The government realized also the necessity of stating clearly what should and what should not be done in the name of mass collectivization; it realized the necessity of slowing down the pace of collectivization by curbing the zeal of the local authorities, and the need of impressing upon them the idea that Lenin's agrarian policy must be adhered to.¹⁰⁹

The change in policy, however, was late in coming, for already groups of peasants had deserted the collectives before the decree referred to had been promulgated. The government attempted to stave off this movement by granting to the

¹⁰⁷ Iakovlev, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

¹⁰⁸ Stalin, J., "Otvet Tovarishcham Kolkhoznikam" (Reply to the Comrades of the Collectives), *Pravda*, April 3, 1930.

¹⁰⁹ *O Borbe s Iskrivleniami Partii v Kolkhoznom Dvizhenii* (Concerning the Struggle against the Party Line Distortions in the Collective Movement), decree issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party on March 15, 1930.

collectives and their members a series of privileges through the enactment of a special decree.¹¹⁰ The latter provided for the freeing from tax liability for two years of all the socialized draft cattle (horses and oxen) in the collective farms; also cows, pigs, chickens and sheep, both those collectively owned and those in the individual possession of the members (Par. 1); during the current year (1930) the collectives were to be supplied with loans amounting to 500 million rubles (Par. 4); all the farm payments on loans extended to them by the state before they had entered the collectives—which obligations were taken over by the latter—were deferred until November 1, 1930 (Par. 5); the indebtedness of the farms to the state in connection with land-organization work carried on there before they had given up their individual farming for collectivistic farming, was canceled (Par. 6). The confiscated kulak property was turned over by the state to the collectives on the condition that the latter repay to the state the value of the property. According to this decree the collective farms were freed from such payments (Par. 8). Finally, the decree released the peasants from criminal or civil liability for infractions of tax laws and for other misdemeanors committed before they had joined the collectives (Par. 7).

This last-minute concession would compensate neither for a period of mass collectivization which weakened the material base of the collectives, nor for the condition traceable to the frenzied pace with which collectivization proceeded. The collectives, ostensibly single, large, cohesive blocks of land, were actually "blocks of peasant patches of land pasted together."¹¹¹ It became comparatively easy for the members to leave the loosely integrated collectives, once they decided to do so as a protest against agricultural policies of which they did not approve. The desertions assumed a mass character. On March 1, 1930, the collective farms comprised 55 per cent of

¹¹⁰ *O Novykh Lgotakh dlia Kolkhozov iikh Chlenov (Concerning New Privileges granted to the Collectives and Their Members)*, decree issued by the Central Executive Committee of the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R., April 2, 1930, *Izvestia*, Apr. 5, 1930.

¹¹¹ Odinets, P., *op. cit.*, p. 17.

the total number of farms as of the spring of 1929, but two months later they comprised only 24 per cent.¹¹² The Communists viewed the partial disintegration of the movement as a gain. Such was the case because "by allowing those who had been forced to join the collective farms to withdraw, and by exposing the pressure put upon the middle peasants as a direct violation of the Party instructions . . . the Central Committee of the Communist Party saved the collective farms."¹¹³

As already pointed out, the collective movement embraces three types of collective farms: *tozy*, *artels* and communes. Within the year June 1929-June 1930 and particularly during the few months of mass collectivization, a definite change took place in the numerical relationship among these types. Just as before and during the first half of 1929 the *tozy* type prevailed, so the *artel* became the most common type during the period under consideration. The figures given in Table XI support this observation:

TABLE XI: TYPES OF COLLECTIVES¹¹⁴

| | <i>Tozy</i> | <i>Artels</i> | Communes | Total |
|------------------------|-------------|---------------|----------|--------|
| June 1, 1929 | 34,032 | 19,535 | 3,178 | 57,045 |
| June 1, 1930 | 14,522 | 62,006 | 7,342 | 85,950 |

Since the local authorities insisted during these months on socializing in the *artel* not only the basic means of production but also the peasant's entire property, the *artel* was such only in name. In reality it meant that those who joined an *artel* were actually joining a commune. The middle-peasant, upon whose good-will the future growth of the movement depended, could not become at one stroke a class-conscious member of a commune with all that this implies. The government therefore decided to put an end to the misinterpretation of the

¹¹² *Kolkhozy Nakanune XVI Sesda Partii* (*Collectives on the Eve of the Sixteenth Congress of the Communist Party*) (Plankhozgiz, Moscow, 1930), p. 7.

¹¹³ Iakovlev, I. A., *Red Villages*, p. 91.

¹¹⁴ *Statisticheskii Spravochnik* (*Statistical Handbook of the U.S.S.R.*) 1932, p. 130.

meaning of an *artel* by publishing model rules wherein the status of this type of collective farm was clearly defined.¹¹⁵

According to this constitution of the new system of agriculture an *artel* is a type of collective where "the agricultural workers, poor and middle-peasants . . . voluntarily unite to build large collective farms by pooling their means of production and labor . . . in order to achieve a high productivity . . . and a large marketable surplus" (Sec. 1). Any member of the working population over sixteen years of age may become a member of an *artel*. This regulation does not apply to the kulaks unless members of their families are devoted supporters of the Soviet State and are willing to guarantee the proper behavior of the kulak while in the collective (Sec. 5). Upon joining an *artel* the member has to make a cash payment ranging from 2 to 10 per cent of the total value of his property (Sec. 6).

All the individual land holdings are combined in one field and "under no condition may the combined land area [of a collective] be decreased . . . those leaving can receive land only from the land reserves in the possession of the state" (Sec. 11). In view of the fact that the land reserves of the state are limited, and the state itself is not interested in promoting individual farming, withdrawal of individual members becomes very difficult. This situation is aggravated by yet another provision to the effect that "from 25 to 50 per cent of the value of the collectivized property . . . contributed to the indivisible capital fund, cannot be returned to the peasant upon his leaving the *artel*" (Sec. 6). It is maintained, however, that this provision does not infringe on the principle of voluntarism because "voluntary entry does not in the least way imply dividing up at will. *The collective farm is not a passageway. Every peasant must understand this before he joins.*"¹¹⁶ Whatever the merit of the argument, it is clear that the provisions were intended to bring about a stricter discipline and to prevent the breaking-up of the *artels*.

One of the most important provisions of the constitution

¹¹⁵ *Pravda*, March 2, 1930.

¹¹⁶ Iakovlev, I. A., *Red Villages*, p. 93 (italics Iakovlev's).

deals with the socialization of the means of production: "All work animals, agricultural implements, commercially productive livestock, all seed reserves, all cattle fodder, are socialized" (Sec. 3). Each member has a right to keep one milch cow for his personal use. Socialization of hogs and of sheep is permitted only in the regions where commercial livestock raising is developed. In connection with this provision it is to be noted that gardens, orchards, etc.—i. e., land within the confines of the peasant yard—are also retained by the holders for individual use (Sec. 2). Thus it was hoped that by socializing the basic means of production the private property notions in the village would be eradicated before long, but in permitting certain practices of an individual economy there is recognition of the fact that "having entered a collective the peasant does not cease to be one overnight."¹¹⁷ Therefore, "to demand that the peasant on joining an *artel* should immediately lose all individualistic habits and interests; should surrender the possibility of carrying on individual farming . . . in addition to the socialized farming . . . is to forget the A, B, C of Marxism and Leninism."¹¹⁸

All the work in the *artel* must be carried on by its members, the exception being the employment of agricultural specialists or the temporary employment of laborers, in time of urgent need. For the work done the members are paid by the *artel* according to the quantity, quality and kind of labor performed (Sec. 7). At a later date a new provision was added to the model rules of an *artel* in an attempt to impose greater responsibility upon the members of a collective farm. Accordingly, should a member of an *artel* refuse, without proper cause, to carry out a task assigned to him, it is the duty of the management of the collective farm to impose upon him a fine amounting to the remuneration of five workdays; upon repeating the same offense, he is to be expelled from the collective farm.¹¹⁹

One of the most important provisions of the model rules

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹¹⁹ "Ob Ukrplenii Kolkhozov" (On Strengthening of the Collective Farms), Sec. 3 of the decree passed by the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. on Jan. 30, 1933, *Pravda*, Jan. 31, 1933.

directly affecting the welfare of the collectivized peasantry is the "obligation of the *artel* . . . to turn over its entire marketable output to the state and the coöperatives" (Sec. 10, art. 22) at prices fixed by the state. The somewhat vague term, "entire marketable output", was given a more concrete meaning shortly afterward. According to the provisions of the new decree, the collectives of the main grain-growing regions were under an obligation to sell to the state from one-fourth to one-third, and in all other regions, one-eighth, of their gross output.¹²⁰

The business of an *artel* is conducted by the general meeting of the members or their elected delegates and by a managing committee elected by the members or the delegates. The general meeting by an open vote decides upon the most important affairs of the *artel*, while the business of the managing committee is to carry out those decisions (Sec. 9).

The *artel* as a member of a regional collective association carries on its work under the direct supervision of the latter. The regional collective associations are united into an All-Russian *Kolkhoz* (Collective) Center whose business it is to direct the work of the entire collective movement in accordance with the policies formulated by the Commissariat of Agriculture of the U.S.S.R.¹²¹

From a Communist point of view such an organization does not adequately represent the fundamental socialistic tenets. The constitution of an *artel* is an attempt at a workable coördination of two apparently mutually exclusive elements: the socialistic and the private individualistic practices. The latter element is cultivated by the economic inequality between the poor and middle peasants. Inequalities in the *artel* still persist for the two following reasons: first, because the property retained uncollectivized by the middle-peasant member is larger than the property retained individually by the poor peasant;

¹²⁰ "O Normakh Sdachi (prodazhi) Zagotovitelnym Organam Zernovoi Produktsii" [Concerning the Quotas of Grain to Be Delivered (Sold) to the (State) Supply Agencies], printed in F. Beloutski's (editor) *Kolkhozno-Kooperativnoe Zakondodatelstvo* (Collective-Coöperative Legislation) (Moscow, 1931), p. 83.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-63.

and, second, since the middle-peasant contributes a larger share to the total collectivized property than the poor peasant, the former receives a larger share of the net output.¹²² Furthermore, with the exception of the land, the socialized means of production do not belong to the state, but to a group of people forming a particular collective farm. While the net product is socialized it is not the property of the state as a whole but that of the members of the given collective farm.

Notwithstanding the absence of a strictly socialistic form, the Communists saw in the *artel* a type of collective farm where one does not encounter two opposing classes; where the economic dependence of one group of peasants upon the other is absent; and where no individual member of a collective may own the basic means of production. These elements, coupled with the fact that the real basis of a collective, the land, is state-owned, show that the proper application of the *artel* constitution results in a hybrid species of socialized agricultural system.*

W. LADEJINSKY

NEW YORK CITY

¹²² Five per cent of the gross crop is divided among the members of the *artel* according to the amount of property they have contributed to it. *Ibid.*, Sec. 3.

* To be continued.—ED.